



St. Matthew's Church Perth

e- Newsletter No. 27

Fri 9th October

We ask that you radiate your love in the twigs of our dried up faith so that when the time for spring comes, the buds of your Holy Spirit will burst forth and we will blossom with your love.

*In Jesus' name
Amen*

Fiona Bruce, Session Clerk
FMBruce6@googlemail.com



This **Sunday 11th October** we are celebrating **Harvest Thanksgiving** at St Matthew's.

Thanks to Roy and Marie Nicoll and Ronnie Soreide who will decorate our church. They are also making up "veggie" bags which people can take as they leave and please leave a donation for these as below! Rather than asking people to bring produce and flowers as in the past, we are asking instead that people donate to the **Christian Aid Harvest Appeal (EcoVeg, which is very appropriate!)** as they leave the service.

If you are not able to attend the service but would like to donate to this appeal, please send your donation marked "Christian Aid Appeal" to:

The Treasurer St Matthew's Church 34 Craigie Road Perth PH2 0BH	OR by BACS To: Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland Account Name: St. Matthew's Church Sort Code: 83-47-00 Account Number: 00760133
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CHRISTIAN AID HARVEST APPEAL:



Millions of excluded people in India face a life of poverty and prejudice. But a new project breaks down barriers and offers them a lifeline. Organic farming gives them a sustainable way of life: it means healthcare, education, and a better future for their children.

The **EcoVeg project** is transforming lives now. By holding our Harvest collection, we can help people move from a life of hardship and rejection, to a future with dignity and joy.

All over the world, people are working to build a more sustainable future for themselves. Stand with them, and make this a season for change.

Dear all

Along with Tom Morrison I "attended" the online Zoom General Assembly last weekend. You will see Tom's Report later in this Newsletter but I wanted to concentrate on our Moderator's opening speeches which I felt were inspirational.

In his Opening Address Rt Rev Martin Fair identified 3 main attitudes common to thriving organisations:

- Not waiting for things to "return to normal"
- Major change is inevitable and we must embrace it
- We need to be more *outwardly-focussed* than ever- *mission* rather than maintenance, saying AND doing

The Moderator stressed that in this period of "uncertainty" we need to "hold our nerve and carry on", trusting in the Name of the Lord who will never leave nor forsake us. Our Hope is in the Lord. We, in turn, need to give hope to the nation.

"I am with you always even to the end of the age".
Matthew 28 : 20

I have "borrowed" a Prayer from Janet Martin which I think is most appropriate for this time of year:

Lord, whether it is this autumn, winter or any other time of year, if our faith becomes in any way dormant we pray that you:

*Bring light to the dark places that trouble us
Mend what is broken in us
Strengthen what is weak in us
Bind our wounds and pour salve on the bruises within us
Heal what is sick in us
Revive what love and compassion may need rekindled in us.*

COFFEE AND CHAT (Macmillan Coffee morning this week all welcome) on Zoom

On Mondays at 11am – 11.45am
Meeting ID: 583 638 8728

For those unable to be present at our church services on 27th September and 4th October, Rev Barbara Quigley has kindly “summarised” her reflections on those days.

You are invited to sit down in a quiet place and reflect.....



Sunday 27th September

Isaiah 5:1-7

“What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it?”

In this question we hear God’s anguish over the breach that has come between God and God’s chosen people Israel. Despite God’s steadfast faithfulness, Israel has not responded as they ought. Where God expects justice, Israel produces bloodshed. Where God expects righteousness, there is only an outcry.

The accusations in God’s indictment still apply today. Still today justice is perverted, as those who have little are exploited by the powerful.

Still today victims of oppression cry out for relief. And still today we whom God chose in baptism fail to produce the justice and righteousness that God expects.

However, God’s faithfulness is not overcome by our unfaithfulness. Though God accuses and condemns us in our sin, God remains faithful to the promise of forgiveness given in our baptisms. We need not hide our guilt, for we know that God’s final word to us will not be one of wrath, but of mercy.

Prayer

God of justice, open my eyes to the ways I fail to love you and my neighbour, and strengthen my heart to trust in your mercy, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

MEDITATIONS on Zoom

On Wednesdays at 9am
Meeting ID: 583 638 8728

Sunday 4th October

Matthew 21:23-27

Power vs Authority

The Jesus story here.

He's in a heated encounter with the leaders of the Jewish people, they are powerful but they lack authority. Their power is backed by their Roman Masters, did the Romans have authority? They certainly had the power backed up by the legions from all over the Empire. [Pontius Pilate from Fortingall?] Jesus is nobody's fool, he knows what is going on here. The Scribes and the Pharisees are out to get him because he has the authority they lack. He has the authority from God and also authority from the ordinary people [and that's an incendiary mixture]. Jesus has the kind of authority they can only wish and hope for but never achieve.

USA Presidential Election

where were you when you discovered Hillary Rodham Clinton had won the vote of the people but not the election? - A pre retirement course run by Methodist Church.

Couldn't believe it. She had the authority but not the power

4 years on here we go again.

But it's so much nastier, if that's possible - the unedifying sight of potential leader of free world arguably the most powerful person on the planet trading playground insults does this detract from their moral authority?

What can we take from all this?

Jesus has power and authority from this we must be aware of the double truth doesn't matter who we are

Martin Fair :

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, with authority vested in him

Craig Dobney:

preaching as sole nominee for Comrie, the new kid on the block just starting out

Pope Francis:

leader of the largest Christian community on the planet and pretty powerful too

Just me, just us

strong in faith or hanging on by the skin of our teeth we bring nothing of worth before God.

Because of Jesus and his promises given to all of us we are God's children, God's chosen beloved, the one in whom God delights.

A resume of the General Assembly 2020

by Tom Morrison

This year the General Assembly, the highest Court of the Church, which generally meets once a year in May to hear Committee Reports on the work of the Church and enact "legislation", met by Zoom online last weekend.

This Assembly was very much a business meeting. Missing was the presentation of Forces Chaplains, The Guild, Overseas visitors reporting on the work of the Church and others who would normally be a part of the ceremony and courtesies of the assembly



FRIDAY 2nd October 7.00 to 9.43pm

A first for the Assembly was the introduction of David Kendall the Chief Executive Officer of the Assembly Trustees. David gave a review of the way forward using many buzz words but giving everyone a clear understanding of the way forward with "Inspirational Leadership", and clear "Planning" at all levels.

The future of 121 George Street was discussed in relationship to a motion from Edinburgh Presbytery suggesting that they may have suitable premises essential to their purpose but could be better utilised. The message came across strongly that 121 's days are limited. Working from home has had a major factor in the present thinking process.

Overheads of the church have to be reduced by 20 – 30 %.

The other thing that I was not aware of was the magnitude of resource that goes to Crossreach, the "social work" arm of the Church - almost the same as is spent on local church matters such as stipends.



SATURDAY 3rd October 9-7pm

Start of a long arduous day,

Probably the most fiercely debated issue was in the Faith Impact Forum's report where there was a deliverance for the church to clearly support the message that Black Lives Matter. There being a counter motion to the effect that, in fact, "all lives matter in the eyes of God". A difficult question where in general terms the latter is correct but in the circumstances of today the motion was carried. 2 aspects of the Assembly affect St. Matthew's vacancy:

Firstly the need for a congregational meeting on the voting regarding restrictions on who can apply for the vacancy has been changed.

Secondly, because we are subject to a change in the conditions under which we are being permitted by Presbytery to call a minister, we fall into a category requiring a vote of the congregation under the terms of "Basis of Adjustment". Until now there has been no mechanism whereby this decision can be made without a congregation having an opportunity to discuss this in open meeting. A way round this has been evolved which requires communication with members to advise of the situation, inviting questions. Subsequently Presbytery will take the questions and prepare answers. These in turn will be distributed to the congregation, together with voting slips to advise agreement or not with the Basis of Adjustment. Only then will we be able to move forward with the Vacancy procedure.

As you can see, this procedure is lengthy and it may unfortunately be some months before we are able to move forward.

After all this debate we came to the Report of the General Trustees which was presented by the Convenor, our "own" Raymond Young, resplendent in his Assembly suit and appropriate Guild Tie. He gave his Report on "well-equipped spaces in the right places".

The meeting was subsequently concluded by the Moderator who deserves a well-earned rest having conducted the entire business without a break and coped with technical hiccups. In his thank you's the Moderator was right to give a special mention too to the Technical team who had worked tirelessly to keep the business rolling on for over 700 delegates.

Seasonal Clippings about the Garden From Nicola McNee

Isaiah 58:11

And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never runs dry.



GREEN MANURE

Most of our veg plots will be starting to look a bit bare by now. My potatoes, courgettes, beetroot and peas have all finished so to protect and enrich the bare soil I am going to sow some green manure. Totally different to brown manure!

Green manure is a quick growing crop which will thrive over the Winter and cover the soil. This helps protect the soil from erosion and leaching of nutrients during the bad weather. It also helps to suppress weed growth. It is sown from seed about now and grows slowly over the winter and early spring. Then in the Spring you can cut it down completely and leave it on the soil surface for a week or so. After this all you need to do is dig it in to the soil and it will break down and help to feed the soil and improve the organic matter content. This can be especially useful if you have a light, sandy soil.

Green manures for the winter are usually a mix of plants. Clovers, winter field beans, grazing rye and mustards. You can buy them in mixed seed packs at the Garden centre or nursery. They will usually just say 'Green manure winter mix' on the pack. Simply sow in rows or broadcast over large areas of soil that you have raked to a fine tilth. Rake them in gently and water if it's dry. Usually there is plenty of Autumn rain! They don't look glamorous or have fancy flowers but they do look after the soil. There's a lot going on underground at the root level!



It is with sadness that we intimate the death of one of our Church family, Tom Gorham, husband of Molly, on Monday 5th October. Sending condolences from all at St Matthew's .



"Wave and Prayer" to Jack Rough, recovering from a foot operation.

Reminder

Macmillan Coffee Morning -Monday 12th October

It will take place as a ZOOM meeting from 11am till 12 pm and access will be via the following Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5836388728> Meeting ID: 583 638 8728

There will be music, poetry, and startling images of Perth as well as the opportunity to chat.

Donations can be made directly to Macmillan using the following link: <https://thyg.uk/BUU004727437> or sent to the Treasurer by making a BACS (bank transfer) payment clearly marked "Macmillan"

Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland Account Name: St. Matthew's Church Sort Code: 83-47-00 Account Number: 00760133	or please send a cheque to : The Treasurer St Matthew's Church 34 Craigie Road Perth PH2 0BH
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The Unexpected

This is a column when different members of the congregation will tell us something unexpected about themselves. Today Ann Attridge continues her story. Hopefully the charity set up by Aarti Naik in Mumbai is one we could support as our “Christmas” charity.



She Grew up in Mumbai's Slums. Today, Aarti Has Educated & Empowered Hundreds of Girls Like Her

A Leap of Faith

Some of you may recall a talk I gave some time ago about stepping into the unknown world of business around ten years ago after a career in secure educational employment. A great deal has happened over those ten years and they have been at times the scariest, most testing and most exciting years of my life. I now have a great little team of people and together we develop software for language learning.

Some of you may also have noticed recently that there was an article in the local papers about a Perth businesswoman. Well, apparently that was me – (I wouldn't have known had Fiona Bruce not kindly pointed it out) but I do remember how delighted I was when I discovered that we had an amazing opportunity to deliver our software into the slums in Mumbai.

For several years now my small, talented team of programmers, animators and designers has been working on developing an application that could teach people to read, write and count in English just through a mobile phone. To reach the greatest number of people with the greatest need, we had to use low cost devices.

To start with, we could not use words or audio and translation is not an option in many parts of the world where people may not be literate in their own

language anyway. Three years after the initial idea, we now have 'Journey 2 Basic Skills' 100 hours of e learning that has just been nominated for Digital Innovation of the Year by the British Council.

Some amazing connections can be made through business networks and one of the people I had met on a trade mission to Hong Kong happened to mention that he was running an ultramarathon to raise funds for a remarkable young woman called Aarti Naik in Mumbai. Aarti had herself overcome great difficulties to complete her education and was now helping girls in her district to learn. Using the Hindi word for 'friend,' she set up Sakhi Education for Girls and has created a one-woman school in the slums. Aarti has great ambitions for her school to reach more and more girls, and their mothers, in other disadvantaged parts of India.

You are always told in Business Schools to identify the problem clearly before trying to solve it. It wasn't difficult in this case. This was exactly the kind of situation we had been working towards. We have been able to provide Aarti and her Girls' Digital School with tablets and our software to give them the grounding they need to make their way in the world.

As we move forward, we will continue to support Aarti and hopefully visit her one day in India. There will be other Aartis out there too in different parts of the world. It felt, many times, that the leap was too challenging but it has been worth every minute of the last ten years to make a difference like that.



Sending our best wishes to Rosemary and Andrew Tate who are both looking well.

St Matthew's Walking Group



**Church walk-
Saturday 10th October**

We will meet at
Guildtown at 10
o'clock. For drivers, as

you come in to Guildtown there is a sign pointing to the right to recycling. Park behind the village hall which is on your left.

The walk is a circular one of about 5 miles. All of it is on paths which are wide enough to enable social distancing. It is mostly flat.

The guidelines are that nobody who has any suspicions of having Covid symptoms should come. Also those of us who are over 70 have to realise that we are more vulnerable!!

The one thing we are unlikely to be able to do is to go for a cuppa afterwards, so it may be good to bring a post walk drink (and/or snack)

Can you please let me know if you are coming so that I can fill out a form before we go rather than at the start?

Jean Young jy2@btinternet.com or phone 07801 889820

CROSSREACH CALENDARS

One of our great supporters, Mary Wright, has contacted me regarding Crossreach calendars. As I'm sure you will be aware, Crossreach carries out "social" work in a huge variety of ways on behalf of the Church of Scotland and, like many charities, is suffering through a reduction in its funds at the moment.

In order to
support

Crossreach at this
difficult time
Mary has ordered
30 Crossreach
calendars. The
calendars are high
quality and great value at £5.00.



**Please let me know if you would like to order a
Calendar and I can either bring them to church on a
Sunday or Mary will deliver them to your house.**

**Fiona Bruce 01738 628154 or
FMBruce6@googlemail.com**

Harvest Thanksgiving in a Barn from Marjorie Clark



Last Sunday, the rural Perthshire parish of Mid Strathearn (for which I am currently Interim Moderator) held its harvest thanksgiving service - but with a difference. With its church buildings not yet reopened due to Covid, local elders Jo and Osla Guest offered a large barn on their farm for the gathering. Permission having been given by the Presbytery, nearly 50 people gathered to give thanks for the harvest, sitting on suitably distanced bales of hay, in the barn decorated by members of the congregation with fruit, flowers and hay. Like St Matthew's, the recently united parish (from Madderty, Monzie, Gask and Fowlis Wester) is currently looking for a minister, and this service was led by retired minister Rev Marina Brown, who encouraged us all to nurture the seeds of our faith in Christ. We did think, looking at last weekend's weather forecast, that we might have to cancel, but our farming friends are made of sterner stuff; people came prepared in their wellies and it was a wonderful service of thanksgiving. The retiring collection of £400 will be split between Christian Aid's Harvest Appeal and the local Foodbank. If interested, you can watch the service on the Mid Strathearn website <https://mid-strathearnchurch.btck.co.uk>



*'It's the new tracing app.
It tells me if I'm near
anyone who understands
the latest rules'*

JANET'S JOTTINGS

A Dormant Faith

This meditation came to me last week when Marjorie was talking about the delights of autumn and the fruits of the spirit.

In autumn, leaves drop, perennial flowers die back, animals begin preparations for hibernation and even we humans start to 'coorie in' a bit earlier in the evenings. Even now I find myself closing my curtains earlier and feeling more like a dormouse as the nights draw in!

However, I don't know how many of you have noticed that almost as soon as the leaves drop, there are signs of tiny wee buds starting to form on the twigs?

They may lie dormant over the winter months, but they are definitely there, slowly drawing up the sugars from the trees in order to have the energy that is necessary to help them burst into bloom when the warmth of spring stimulates them.

Sometimes our faith can go through seasonal changes. Many of us will no doubt have had experiences in our lives when our faith has lain 'dormant'. It might be at times when we are:

Grieving and struggling to comprehend the loss of a loved one

Life may have led us away from the church or fellowship with other Christians

We may be doubting our faith, wondering where God is in our time of need.

We may be wondering which path to take and not feel we are getting any guidance from God

At times like this we may not only be angry with God, perhaps even choosing to acknowledge his existence, stuck in a spiritual wilderness and awaiting some sort of nourishment to revive and restore our faith.

Being a Christian, is not always a 'walk in the park', or like feeling like summer all year round. It is full of challenges and we should be ready for all the changes, unexpected or not, that come our way.

Why do we think that it is a necessity for us to know the timing of everything that is to happen in our life? Some things happen much quicker than we expect and some things much slower.

In Acts 1:7 it states *"He said to them it is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority"*



Have we the patience to accept it is okay NOT to know or understand everything? Can we accept and trust that when we are at our lowest, that if we have the patience to listen and wait, God's power will bring our faith out of our 'dormant season' and prepare us once more to bud in the spring?

We are indeed reassured of this very fact in Romans 8:11 *"The same power that raised Christ from the dead is inside you."*

Isn't that just an amazing statement? I find it SO powerful (and indeed a bit scary!) to think that God has given us that power. It may be deep inside, but it is THERE!

Therefore, if we find our faiths going into a 'dormant season' we should take heart from the words of Isaiah Ch 55 v 10: *As the rain and the snow come down from Heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."*

Finally, I conclude with the words of Isaiah Ch 40 v 8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

Re-opening of St Matthew's Church

Psalm 122: "I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

Each week there will be 35 spaces available for online booking on "Eventbrite". This is the link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stmatthews-church-tay-street-perth-church-service-tickets-119178926377>

If you are not on the internet, or the internet spaces are full, you can also make a telephone booking. please contact Facilities and Outreach Manager, Bev Skene on 01738 259961 during the day 9 – 5

To Contribute please contact me on FMBruce6@googlemail.com